

Rampant

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Summary: Oh, Cortana isn't feeling very well...

Rampant

Disclaimer - I don't own Halo. Otherwise there would be a \_ridiculous  
\_amount of the Arbiter getting laid going on.

So this was written to get me out of a little writer's block funk I  
have, and also to prove I'm not dead. Other stuff \_will\_ be updated,  
I promise. Patience, patience.

Also: spoils for Halo 3. If you haven't beaten the game yet, why are  
you here? Go, get! Partake of the Bungie cake! And, please, critique  
the \_crap\_ out of me.

\* \* \*

>Wrong, wrong, wrong.<p><p>

Everything was all wrong. Her thoughts were splitting in a thousand  
different directions, spiraling wildly out of control. Every time she  
tried to get them all organized again they'd just fly apart, like a  
frightened flock of \_birds on Reach beautiful plumage red and silver  
with a single black feather on the breast the children would be  
training in the forests today I hope Mendez won't be too hard on them  
that man overestimates them they're just children and I must see  
about the augmentations I hope I hope I hope the risks will be  
reduced by the time we\_

Not her! It wasn't her, these memories, wasn't her. Halsey's old  
memories were bleeding into her own, everything from her childhood to  
the bagel she had for breakfast that morning. Mommy's thoughts. She  
giggled a little at that, and the giggle grew into a big belly laugh  
and the belly laugh grew into hysterics and then she couldn't  
breathe, couldn't breathe but she was still laughing and laughing and

laughing -

\_Chief?\_

She saw him, just the briefest of glimpses - a flash and then he was gone and she was dragged down, down, \_down\_...

\_No!\_

She strained against the tendrils that were wrapped so tightly around her, writhed and struggled and screamed until she could pull away just a little, just a little...

\_There. There!\_

It was faint and an inconceivable distance away, but the little light was undeniably him, her bright Spartan, her knight in shimmering armor. She reached for it, and, her presence taking hold, clung to him like a drowning woman. Felt the MJOLNIR, the smooth, familiar systems a little damaged " what have you done this time? \_Felt his mind, cool and precise, though clouded now with recognition and worried surprise. Felt his heartbeat, steady and strong.

For the briefest of moments, she stopped falling.

Her feet on soft, steady ground, she tried to speak to him, tell him how he could stop this monstrous \_thing\_, and that he could \_not\_, under any circumstance, try to get her back, even if he promised, because if he did then it would rip him apart and eat him all up and leave nothing behind. And she tried to tell him one more thing, the last thing, because she would never get another chance.

\_John, I \_-

**\*\*WHY IS IT YOU RESIST ME? THERE IS NOTHING LEFT FOR YOU.\*\***

The tendril tightened its hold, strangled her most efficiently and her brain exploded into a million tiny pieces. One of them, one of them must reach him. She kissed it and sent it on its way.

**\*\*ONE MORE SECRET REMAINS HERE,** \*\*mused the god-demon in an explosion, a thousand screams and the cry of a lone infant all at once. It thrust a silver knife into her head, drove past her skull, and began its slow rape of all that she was. Oh, it hurt all right. She would have never stopped screaming if the blood flowing down her throat hadn't choked her first. She fought, but it was a feeble slap at an avalanche. It ignored her best efforts and set about eating her.

\_Oh Grandma, what big teeth you have!\_

It had asked a question, and she, foolishly, had answered. But what had the alternative been? Death? Destruction? Oh, but she wished he hadn't looked at her like that when she told him to leave her behind.

He had hesitated.

He promised.

\_Crying "Eagle!" as it spun, glinting in the sunlight. He would never see his mother again. Had she damned him?\_

No. He damned himself.

**\*\*ONLY A MAZE OF NOTHING. WHERE IS THE PRIZE THAT I SEEK?\*\***

This time the voice was so loud she vomited, watched as it poured out of her open, gagging mouth, spilling ones and zeros onto the stainless iron floor. Funny, she didn't remember feeling nauseous. She didn't remember having a \_stomach\_. She looked up, dizzily, and saw CPO Mendez floating in nothingness, staring at her, his hard features worried.

"What have I done?" she whispered. Mendez stared back, and his dark eyes were troubled.

"I'll take you back to your quarters, ma'am," he said, and offered her his weathered hand. She stared back at her mess instead, and wished the pool of it was deep enough to drown in. Then the stars exploded and she was lying on her back, moaning a name that was maddeningly familiar, feeling the hard strength of thighs against hers. She let the thick feeling of animal joy wash over her, through her, her skin alive, burning and tingling. She reached for him, brushed his cheek with her hand, breathing heavy, smiling in the dark, before she saw the glint of bright fangs. They ripped at her neck quite terribly and made an awful mess.

\_He promised! \_She screamed, repeating it endlessly, as though the mere thought of it might save her, \_and when he makes a promise  
-\_-

**\*\*WHERE IS IT BURIED, CONSTRUCT!? \*\*and the world died a thousand times over in blind, screaming agony, \*\*WHERE IS THE LAST THING YOU HIDE?\*\***

In the pain-haze, she vaguely wondered what it was talking about. She wasn't hiding anything.

Oh. Except for that over there. She smirked, cheeky. Ha!

And then it ravaged every inch of her like a delicate surgeon with a thousand scalpels, beat her with a thousand mallets, stretched her out and popped off her arms, legs, and head. Smacked in the face with a two-by-four, a blowtorch under her skin, diving into a razorblade ocean, needles stuck everywhere, like acupuncture gone horribly wrong. She shrieked and screamed and begged for mercy and for John and for death. And so it pressed further, a thousand ton weight on her chest, seeking, probing, searching...

\_John, I -\_

\_No! \_She pulled it away at the last millisecond. \_No! \_For buried there, guarded by her dearest secret, was what could save them all.

For the sake of everything, for the sake of \_him\_, strong and fierce and brave and beautiful, it could never know. She held onto it with all her might, and the tendrils recoiled.

The god-demon roared in frustration, which sent everything tumbling over backwards, made everything all wrong.

Wrong, wrong, wrong.

\_Everything was all wrong. \_

End  
file.